

THE MILITANT

INSIDE

Deepening working-class character
of the Socialist Workers Party
— PAGES 8-10

A SOCIALIST NEWSWEEKLY PUBLISHED IN THE INTERESTS OF WORKING PEOPLE

VOL. 77/NO. 31 AUGUST 26, 2013

Egyptian army kills hundreds, imposes curfew, martial law

BY SETH GALINSKY

The Egyptian army and police launched a bloody crackdown against supporters of deposed Muslim Brotherhood President Mohammed Morsi in Cairo and other cities in Egypt Aug. 14. Interim President Adly Mansour also declared a state of emergency, imposed a 7 p.m. to 6 a.m. curfew and appointed provincial governors loyal to the military brass.

According to state-owned *Al Ahram*

**FARMERS IN EGYPT PRESS
FIGHTS FOR LAND, DEBT RELIEF**
—article, p. 4

newspaper, as of Aug. 15 there were 525 dead and more than 3,700 wounded. The Interior Ministry said that 43 police and soldiers were also killed.

Mohamed El Baradei — who was appointed vice president after Morsi's ouster and represents Egypt's relatively small liberal bourgeois intelligencia — resigned from the government in protest.

Firing tear gas, automatic weapons and birdshot, and sending in bulldozers

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Outrage in Fla. meets cop killing for graffiti



Militant/Naomi Craine

Protest in Miami Beach Aug. 10 against killing of 18-year-old Israel Hernández-Llach by cops.

BY NAOMI CRAINE

MIAMI BEACH, Fla. — “Israel did not deserve this,” said Gina Stephenson at a rally here Aug. 10 to protest the cop killing of Israel Hernández-Llach. “I’ve known Israel since seventh grade, and he was a great person,” she said. “Art is not a crime.” Hernández, 18, was an artist and

photographer who had some of his work exhibited locally. On the morning of Aug. 6, he was spray-painting his graffiti tag “Reefa” on an abandoned McDonald’s when the Miami Beach cops began to chase him. After being cornered a couple blocks away Officer Jorge Mercado shot Hernández with a Taser in the chest. He was pronounced dead at the hospital shortly thereafter.

The police “were all clapping and

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Under pressure, Justice Dept. vows to restore voting rights

BY BRIAN WILLIAMS

One month after the U.S. Supreme Court struck down the part of the 1965 Voting Rights Act that determines what state and local governments need federal approval before changing their voting laws, Attorney General Eric Holder announced July 25 that the Justice Department will seek to reimpose those requirements in Texas and possibly elsewhere. The states, counties and cit-

**DEFEND VOTING RIGHTS!
MARCH IN DC AUG. 24!**

—editorial, p. 11

ies that fell under the “preclearance” requirements were those with a proven history of voter disenfranchisement of Blacks and Latinos.

Holder’s July 25 announcement came as dozens of Black rights organizations, many unions and other groups are mobilizing to march in Washington, D.C., Aug. 24 on the 50th anniversary of the 1963 March on Washington for Jobs and Freedom. Organizers — including the NAACP, Martin Luther King Center, and National Action Network — have put defense of the Voting Rights Act at the center of the action.

The Supreme Court ruled “unconstitutional” the preclearance list put together

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Iowa: Socialists campaign door to door, workers sign to put candidates on ballot



Militant/Asha Ramachandra

Margaret Trowe, Socialist Workers candidate for Des Moines city council, introduces retired hotel cleaner Essie Benson to working-class campaign after knocking on her door. Benson subscribed to *Militant* and was among 425 who signed to put party on ballot Aug. 10-11.

BY DAVID ROSENFELD

DES MOINES, Iowa — “The heart of our campaign has been going door to door talking with workers throughout the city,” Margaret Trowe, one of three Socialist Workers Party candidates for city council here, told 30 people packed into the campaign headquarters Aug. 10 for a fundraising dinner and meeting to hear the

candidates and discuss the two-day drive to put them on the ballot.

“We decided to organize gathering signatures to get on the ballot the same way,” Trowe said, “and it was an unqualified success.”

Four hundred twenty-five people in Des Moines signed up to put Trowe, Ellen Brickley and David Rosenfeld

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Renew now, don’t miss an issue!

BY LOUIS MARTIN

“I have to renew, I got a letter in the mail,” yelled a member of Local 1526 of the International Longshoremen’s Association Aug. 10 in the early morning on her way to a job at the port of Fort Lauderdale, as she passed a literature table set up by *Militant* supporters near the union hall.

Hundreds of subscriptions sold during the international spring campaign will expire in the coming weeks. If yours is among them, renew now!

“I truly appreciate receiving and learning from the *Militant* and would like to continue receiving it,” wrote a subscriber behind bars in Pennsylvania along with his renewal form.

(The *Militant* Prisoners’ Fund makes it possible for inmates to order

subscriptions at a reduced rate of \$6 for six months or free of charge for those with no means to pay. Contributions to the fund can be sent to the *Militant* address listed on page 2.)

When Alia Arif, a pharmacist from Manchester, England, renewed her *Militant* subscription for the third time, she said she had been passing along some of the Pathfinder Press books she bought for others to read.

“I gave the *Working Class and the*

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Omaha conference: ‘Free Omaha Two, Cuban Five’

BY JOE SWANSON

OMAHA, Neb. — Some 60 people took part in Black August Weekend: Human Rights-Political Prisoner Commemorative Festival held Aug. 2-3 at the Malcolm X Memorial Foundation Center near the birth site of the historic leader. The event focused on the more-than-four-decade campaign to win freedom for political prisoners Ed Poindexter and Mondo we Langa.

Known as the “Omaha Two,” Poindexter and we Langa (formerly David Rice) are former leaders of the Black Panther chapter here. They were railroaded to prison on false charges of killing a police officer, who died in 1970 after being lured into a home where a suitcase bomb exploded. Both men are serving life sentences. The jury was never informed that the two were the targets of the FBI’s Cointelpro spying and disruption campaign directed against Black rights organizations, anti-war coalitions, socialists and others.

Sponsored by the Malcolm X Memorial Foundation, Omaha Jericho Movement, Nebraskans for Justice and X Factor, the event also discussed government attacks on workers’ rights and the fight to free other political prisoners in the U.S., including the Cuban Five.

The opening program featured the film “Cointelpro 101.” “The government was spying on every organization showing dissent at the time: the American Indian Movement, Martin Luther King, Puerto Ricans and the Communist Party,” said Carlos Carr, a board member of the Malcolm X Memorial Foundation, who chaired and organized the event.

The next day participants watched video interviews with the Omaha Two from the Nebraska State Penitentiary.

“My first protest was against a white army officer for racist brutality against a fellow soldier,” said Poindexter, talking about his experience in the U.S. military while stationed in Germany in the 1960s.

We Langa said he got active in politics “writing for a local underground newspaper distributed in the Omaha Black community that monitored city council meetings and ongoing cop violence.”

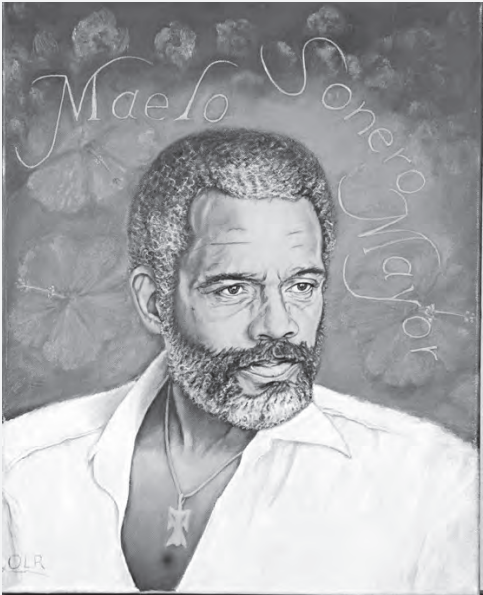
Fight to free Cuban Five

Jacob Perasso, Socialist Workers Party candidate for Omaha city council in the May elections, gave a presentation on the fight to win freedom for the Cuban Five. “Antonio Guerrero, Fernando González, René González, Gerardo Hernández and Ramón Labañino are Cuban revolutionaries who accepted assignments during the 1990s from the Cuban government to gather information on the activities of Cuban-American paramilitary groups organizing on U.S. soil,” Perasso said. “These groups have a long record of carrying out bombings, assassinations and other murderous attacks, both against targets in Cuba and supporters of the Cuban Revolution in the United States, Puerto Rico and elsewhere.”

Perasso also talked about efforts to push back a recent attack on free speech, the July 16 political break-in at his home. A number added their names to an open letter to Omaha Mayor Jean Stothert.

Charles E. Jones, professor of Afri-

Paintings by political prisoner Oscar López shown in NY



Militant/Seth Galinsky

NEW YORK — More than 50 people attended the Aug. 9 opening of “A Human Being, An Artist,” an exhibition of paintings

by Puerto Rican political prisoner Oscar López Rivera, who has spent the last 32 years in U.S. prisons on trumped-up charges of “seditious conspiracy.” For 12 of those years he was locked up in solitary confinement.

Sery Colón, Eric Aviles and Jesús Papoleto Meléndez read poems about the fight for independence for Puerto Rico and to free political prisoners in the U.S. Salsa musician Choco Orta performed a cappella.

López was denied parole last year. Graciano Matos, a leader of the Boricua Human Rights Network, announced that more activities are being planned to demand President Barack Obama pardon López.

The exhibit, sponsored by Casa de las Américas and Boricua Human Rights Network, will be open through Sept. 8 on Fridays from 4 p.m. to 9 p.m. and Saturdays and Sundays from 2 p.m. to 8 p.m. here at Casa de las Américas, 182 E. 111th St. Above left, López’s painting of Ismael Rivera, the legendary *son* singer of Puerto Rico.

— SETH GALINSKY

cana Studies at the University of Cincinnati and editor of *The Black Panther Party Reconsidered*, gave the keynote address on efforts by city and federal spies and cops to destroy the Panthers.

“The issue of police brutality continues nationwide today, as it did against Omaha’s Black population in the context of the 1970 frame-up of Poindexter and we Langa,” Jones said.

The afternoon session featured a panel of Nebraska state Sen. Ernie Chambers; August (Buddy) Hogan, former chair of the Omaha chapter of the NAACP; Lennox Hinds, professor of criminal justice at Rutgers University and one of we Langa’s attorneys; Tariq Al-Amin, president of Nebraskans for Justice; Carlos Carr, board member of Malcolm X Memorial Foundation Center and Community Talk Radio; and Laura Garza, chairperson of the Social-

ist Workers Party in Omaha.

“In the early to mid-1990s, members of the Nebraska Parole Board recommended commutation of their life sentences,” said Hinds. “But the Nebraska Board of Pardons — comprised of the Nebraska governor, secretary of state, and attorney general — have consistently refused.”

Chambers said he will press legislation to get parole for the Omaha Two.

For more information and to get involved in the fight to free Ed Poindexter and Mondo we Langa, contact Nebraskans for Justice at P.O. Box 11725, Omaha, NE 68111 or email: comments@nebraskansforjustice.com.

To write directly to the Omaha Two: Ed Poindexter # 27767 P.O. Box 2500, Lincoln, NE 68542-2500 and Mondo we Langa (David Rice) # 27768 P.O. Box 2500, Lincoln, NE 68542-2500.

THE MILITANT

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Militant/Betsy Farley

Fast-food workers protest Aug. 1 in Chicago.

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Signed articles by contributors do not necessarily represent the *Militant’s* views. These are expressed in editorials.

Judge denies compassionate release for Lynne Stewart

BY BRIAN WILLIAMS

NEW YORK — Jailed attorney Lynne Stewart's plea for compassionate release was rejected yet again, this time by a federal judge. Stewart, 73, who's suffering from breast cancer that has spread to both her lungs, lymph nodes and bones, is a criminal defense lawyer who often took cases other attorneys shunned for political and career reasons and defended working people who could not afford typical lawyers' fees.

At an Aug. 8 court hearing, Judge John Koeltl, the same judge who sentenced Stewart to prison for 10 years, "said if I order her release, I'll be breaking the law," Stewart's husband Ralph Poynter told the *Militant* in an Aug. 9 phone interview.

The judge was referring to the 1984 Sentencing Reform Act, which says a court decision for compassionate release must be based on a petition from the Bureau of Prisons.

Stewart filed for compassionate release in April. The prison warden recommended the request be approved, but the Federal Prison Bureau rejected it June 24.

"Even though everyone admits Lynne is dying and complies with all necessities for compassionate release, the gov-

ernment is saying it doesn't have to grant it to you," said Poynter.

The Bureau of Prisons stalled for two months on taking any action on Stewart's request while her condition continued to worsen in prison, Poynter said. Stewart has filed a second request for compassionate release based on medical evidence of her deteriorating condition.

Stewart has been in jail since Nov. 2009 on trumped-up charges for violating Special Administrative Measures that shut off communication with the outside world for prisoners designated as "terrorists." The measures — set up after Sept. 11, 2001 — were imposed on her client Sheik Omar Abdel-Rahman, a blind Muslim cleric convicted in 1995 of "seditious conspiracy" for alleged links to a plot to bomb the United Nations and assassinate former Egyptian President Hosni Mubarak.

For facilitating a press release to Re-



Debra Sweet/World Can't Wait

Ralph Poynter speaking at July 31 protest outside New York courthouse where request for compassionate release for Lynne Stewart was being made. Eight days later judge rejected it.

uters from Abdel-Rahman commenting on a cease-fire between the Islamic Group and the U.S.-backed Mubarak dictatorship, Stewart was convicted of "providing material support to a terrorist organization" and other lesser charges.

"It's a bitter pill to swallow when you see what you know is coming to fruition for someone you care about very much," Poynter said. "We're on the verge of losing another battle, but we're never going to quit this fight."



Lynne Stewart

Don't miss an issue! Help win new readers!

Continued from front page

Transformation of Learning and *Cuba and Angola: Fighting for Africa's Freedom and Our Own* to a coworker from Eritrea in East Africa," a gesture he really appreciated, she said. These two books are among nine offered at reduced prices with a *Militant* subscription or renewal. (See ad on this page.)

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developments in world politics.

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Supporters of the *Militant* who signed up subscribers during the spring drive are beginning to get back in touch with those they met to engage in political discussions, win as many as possible to become long-term readers and find those involved in, or interested in getting involved in, impor-

tant struggles and other working-class political activity.

This follow-up is part and parcel of regular, systematic door-to-door sales of the socialist newsweekly and books on revolutionary politics.

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CANADA

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'Cuba Speaks for the Exploited of Latin America': Reportback on Seventh Continental Conference in Solidarity with Cuba in Venezuela. Speaker: Katy LeRougetel, Communist League candidate for mayor of Verdun and participant in conference. Fri., Aug. 23, 7:30 p.m. 7107 St-Denis, room 204. Tel.: (514) 272-5840.

NEW ZEALAND

Auckland
Defend Political Rights! Speaker: Felicity Coggan, Communist League. Fri., Aug. 23, 7 p.m. Donation: \$5 waged, \$2 unwaged. 4/125 Grafton Rd. Tel.: (09) 369-1223.

UNITED KINGDOM

Manchester
Workers in Egypt Gain Confidence From Fight to Overthrow Morsi. Speaker: Paul Davies, Communist League, participant in *Militant* reporting team to Egypt. Sat. Aug. 24, 6 p.m. Room 301 Hilton House, 26-28 Hilton St., M1 2EH. Tel.: (016) 1478-2496.



The Cuban Five

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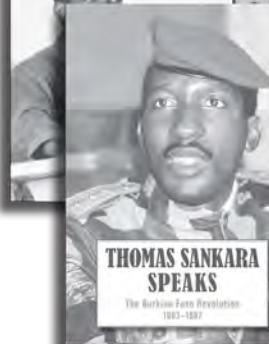


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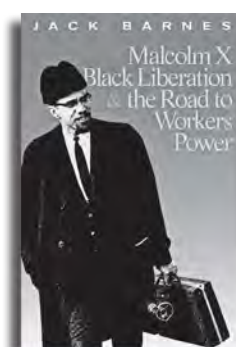
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on page 10



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Farmers in Egypt press fights for land, debt relief

BY PAUL DAVIES

FAYED, Egypt — In Egypt, where 58 percent of the population lives in rural areas, small farmers have stepped up their fights for lands rights and other demands since the 2011 popular overthrow of the Hosni Mubarak dictatorship. After elected President Mohammed Morsi failed to deliver on promises to address the farmers’ grievances, many took part in the movement to oust his Muslim Brotherhood government, confident and determined to press ahead with their struggles.

“For decades small farmers have waged fights for access to land, cheap credit, fertilizer and seeds, abolishing debtors prison, and the cancelation of debts,” Ibrahim Abdel Gawed, an organizer of the Independent Farmers Union, told members of the *Militant* reporting team that traveled to this small town near the Suez Canal during its recent visit to Egypt. “These are the same issues we continue to fight around today.”

Mustapha Moughazi, a former mango farmer here, said he was forced to sell some of his farm and rent out the remaining land five years ago to pay off loans that banks foisted on him and other farmers. He described a practice of the Development and Agricultural Credit Bank to pressure farmers to put their land up as collateral for loans that had nothing to do with farming.

“They would push the loans and urge you to give your daughter a big wedding, buy a vehicle, or whatever. Under [former Egyptian heads of state] Gamel Abdel Nasser and Anwar Sadat, interest rates were only 3 percent. Now they’re as much as 18 percent, and the payments are impossible,” said Moughazi. “The agricultural bank should change its name to the ‘bank for the imprisonment of farmers.’”

In the 1990s, thousands of farmers received jail terms for not paying their debts. According to Gawed this practice continues in many rural areas, and small farmers unable to pay their debts are

imprisoned. The Independent Farmers Union campaigns for their release.

“From Nasser through to today, government policies have favored large farmers against the small farmers. If there is a water shortage it’s always the small farmers that receive the least,” Karam Saber, director of the Land Center for Human Rights, told the *Militant* during an interview at the center’s office in Cairo. The Land Center defends the rights of agricultural workers and farmers, and works with the Independent Farmers Union.

Many people interviewed by the *Militant* spoke favorably of the farm policy under Nasser, who came to power in a popular military coup that overthrew the hated Egyptian monarchy in the early 1950s. The new military regime instituted measures in response to pressure from workers and farmers, including setting a 200 feddan (1 feddan equals 1.038 acres) limit for the amount any one farmer could hold, and distributing land to tens of thousands of small producers. But after the land reform 80 percent of Egyptian farmers were still landless. The farm cooperatives were headed by the landed aristocracy.

Residents of Fayed, a town renown for its mango and melon production, took part in the massive June 30 demonstrations in Cairo and nearby Ismailia against the Muslim Brotherhood government. “The June 30 revolution was necessary,” Moughazi said. “I was at first happy with the Morsi government, but within a year he was worse than Mubarak!”

Many farmers in interviews with the local press and those the *Militant* spoke with were especially angry over the unkept promises of the Morsi government to relieve debts of small farmers.

“Hundreds of the village’s farmers believed the president’s decision would improve their financial situation,” said Farag. But the debts of only a small number were alleviated.

“The cost of seeds has risen,” Moughazi told the *Militant*. Government seed production has been reduced and privately produced seed is much more expensive. In addition, shortages of government-subsidized fuel have as much as doubled the cost of harvesting crops like wheat that depend on diesel-powered machinery.

Morsi had decreed a minimum price of 2,000 Egyptian pounds (\$286) per ton for rice. Al-Jazeera reports that when Mohamed AbdelKader, a farmer in Daqahliya governate, complained to buyers that the price they were offering of just 1,600 pounds was less than the new minimum, he was told “so let the president buy your rice.”

“In the 1990s Mubarak removed restrictions on the upper limit tenant farmers can be charged for rent and ended restrictions on expulsions of tenants,” Saber said.



Top, Jano Charbel; below, *Militant*/Paul Mailhot
Top, protest June 15, 2011, against arrest of farmers accused of “obstruction of traffic” and other charges as result of sit-in demanding lower rents. Below, from left, retired mango farmer Mustapha Moughazi, Independent Farmers Union organizer Ibrahim Abdel Gawed, and *Militant* worker-correspondent Paul Davies. Farmers were among those who fought against the regimes of Hosni Mubarak and Mohammed Morsi, Gawed said. “We’ve lost our fear.”

“As a result half a million farmers have lost their land since then,” noted Gawed.

“Land that is being reclaimed from the desert should be handed to small farmers, not just wealthy landowners and there should be a 100 feddan limit on land ownership,” Saber said. “Farmers with less than five feddans of land should have their debts cancelled.”

Since the 2011 overthrow of Mubarak, farmers have organized protests against evictions and other government policies. Hundreds demonstrated in May 2011 against the eviction of farmers in Monofeya. In 2012 farmers from Madinat al-Sadat protested in Cairo following their removal from land they had reclaimed from the desert in 2007. This year Fayoum farmers demonstrated in

Cairo demanding the release of eight farmers in prison for allegedly stealing crops. Hundreds of farmers from three villages in the Nile Delta blocked a highway in April to demand the government release water for their crops.

“A large proportion of the millions who signed the petition demanding that Morsi step down were workers and farmers,” said Mahmoud Ali Mahmoud, a plumber from Ismailia, describing the response to the petition circulated by Tamarod, a coalition of groups and individuals opposed to the Muslim Brotherhood’s repressive regime.

“On January 25, 2011, and again on June 30 this year, farmers were among those who fought” against governments that oppressed farmers and workers, said Gawed. “We’ve lost our fear.”

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by Jack Barnes
Arabic \$12, English \$20

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Help ‘Militant’ cover workers’ struggles around the world

Supporters of the *Militant* in Seattle have set a good example. “Some 40 people attended a *Militant* Labor Forum here Aug. 10 on ‘The Uprising in Egypt and the Working Class,’ featuring Mary Martin, Socialist Workers candidate for mayor, who took part in the *Militant*’s recent fact-finding trip to Egypt,” wrote John Naubert. “Participants contributed a total of \$1,700 to help pay for the trip.” In the Aug. 12 issue, the *Militant* appealed for funds to help defray the trip’s expenses. To help, send a check or money order to: The *Militant*, 306 W. 37th St., 10th floor, New York, NY 10018.

Youth killed by Miami Beach cops

Continued from the front page
doing high-fives all over his body,” 19-year-old Thiago Souza, who caught up with Hernández right after he was hit with the stun gun, told the *Miami Herald* Aug. 9. “It was almost as if they were proud of what they did.”

Officer Mercado has been placed on paid leave.

The store where Hernández had been spray-painting has been turned into a memorial, covered with photos, graffiti tags, messages and flowers. It has been the site of protests and a steady stream of friends and strangers paying their respects.

On the evening of Aug. 9 Savannah Diaz, a college student who went to high school with Hernández, told the *Militant* he had been threatened by the cops before. In addition to protesting, she said, his friends “are trying to raise money to help the family with the funeral.”

Veronica Greulach, another former classmate, had come to lay flowers and expressed her outrage at the police action. “You’re not supposed to taste someone in the chest!” she said.

Tasers are touted by the police as “nonlethal.” But Amnesty International has documented more than 500

Continued on page 7

ON THE PICKET LINE

Locked-out Steelworkers in Canada reject ‘final’ offer

NANTICOKE, Ontario — After more than three months on the picket line following an April 28 lockout by the U.S. Steel bosses, members of Steelworkers Local 8782 on July 31 rejected the company’s “final” contract offer by 71 percent.

The lockout shut down U.S. Steel’s Lake Erie Works, which employs more than 1,000 workers, 771 of whom took part in the latest contract vote. The lockout began after workers voted in April by 70 percent to reject the company’s initial contract proposal.

U.S. Steel’s latest offer did not include the bosses’ initial demand to end seniority rights for job openings and allow free reign to contract out union jobs, according to workers on the picket line. But it did include other concessions, including cuts to vacation time and changes to the cost-of-living allowance.

“They are trying to do everything they can to break the union,” Mark Lombardo, a shop steward in steel casting, said at the union hall Aug. 3.

The current lockout is the third since U.S. Steel bought Canadian-owned Stelco in 2007.

“Forty percent of the workforce did not go through the last lockout in 2010,” Lombardo said. “But the vote shows they didn’t succeed in dividing us.”

The vote was supervised by government labor officials and held at the behest of the company, which under Ontario law had the right to force a vote on its proposal once during the lockout.

In a July 15 public statement, the company claimed the vote was necessary “to give our employees the chance to have their voices heard — something the union leadership refused to afford them.”

U.S. Steel also sent letters to the workers saying a “no” vote would result in an indefinite lockout. “Keep in mind that the previous lockout at Lake Erie lasted 10 months, and the Company never did back off its position,” read one dated July 29.

“For me the biggest issue is lack of recognition by U.S. Steel for the bargaining team,” 32-year veteran millwright Graham Hartwell told the *Militant* at the main gate picket line. “They don’t bargain in good faith. It’s like not recognizing the union. There is no respect.”

Support for the workers in the surrounding community is broad. While

these reporters were on the picket line, retired pipefitter Larry Symonds and his wife drove up to the line. “I heard about the vote and I came here to bring my solidarity,” said Symonds. “I am glad you are united and still fighting.”

Union officials are now preparing a counterproposal to the rejected offer.

To donate funds or give your support, contact Local 8782 official Terry Barnard at (519) 587-2000 ext. 225.

— Michel Dugré and John Steele

Bay Area transit strike ends after governor orders injunction

SAN FRANCISCO — On the request of Calif. Gov. Jerry Brown, Superior Court Judge Curtis Karnow issued an injunction Aug. 11 barring 2,600 unionists from striking the San Francisco Bay Area Rapid Transit system for 60 days.

Workers on the fifth-busiest heavy-rail transit system in the U.S. organized a four-and-a-half-day strike at the beginning of July. That action ended when officials of the Amalgamated Transit Union Local 1555 and Service Employees International Union Local 1021 agreed to return to work and continue negotiations.

The union is demanding a 15 percent pay raise over a three-year contract. BART is pressing a 9 percent raise over four years.

The company also wants to downgrade its health plan and implement employee pension payments of 2 percent the first year, to be increased by 1 percent annually for the following three years. The union responded to the pension demands with an offer to set employee payments at 7 percent each year in exchange for an additional 6.5 percent wage raise.

— Eric Simpson and Jeff Powers

Washington berry pickers defend strike gains, union

BURLINGTON, Wash. — Berry pickers at Sakuma Brothers Farms in Washington’s Skagit Valley are organizing to defend their gains amid ongoing negotiations with the company after conducting two strikes in July that won higher wages and better living conditions. The pickers, mostly in-



Militant/Baskaran Appu

Warehouse workers in Auckland, New Zealand, picket Kuehne & Nagel freight forwarding company Aug. 9 in one-day strike demanding wage raise and union contract.

digenous Mixteca and Trique people from southern Mexico, have been organizing through their newly formed union *Familias Unidas por la Justicia* (Families United for Justice).

“What we have won is piece rates based on \$12 an hour,” said Ramón Torres, president of the 11-person steering committee elected by the workers, in an Aug. 3 interview. “The company brought us new mattresses in the cabins. We won the right to a three-person committee that test-picks each field to negotiate the rate with the bosses.”

“This has been a very good experience,” Torres said. “With the union, everything is possible. When people unite, they gain confidence and get respect.”

Security guards posted in the fields and near housing were withdrawn by the company when the workers made that a precondition for continuing negotiations through a mediator. And 15 young workers fired Aug. 5 were reinstated the next day.

Sakuma Brothers Farms has not responded to calls from the *Militant* requesting comment.

Messages and donations can be made to Community to Community Development, labeled “Sakuma Workers’ Fund,” at 203 W. Holly St., Ste. 317, Bellingham, WA 98225.

— Clay Dennison

New Zealand warehouse workers fight for pay raise, union contract

AUCKLAND, New Zealand — Warehouse workers employed by the freight forwarding company Kuehne & Nagel struck for one day Aug. 9 to press their demand for a wage raise and union contract.

“We just want to be treated fairly,” said union delegate Richard Anniss on the picket line. Workers began joining the First Union in April, and within a couple of days the company was encouraging them to leave by giving all nonunion workers a \$1 an hour pay raise and premium pay for Saturday overtime, he said.

Eighteen of the 30 workers are on fixed-term contracts. These can be as short as three months, and it is up to the company whether they are renewed. “We are fighting for fixed-termers to be in the union,” Anniss said.

Elva Pritchard said she joined the union “to stop harassment by a boss,” such as phoning sick workers to tell them to come to work.

A member of the Maritime Union addressed the pickets to extend support from port workers, who are also in a contract dispute with their employer.

— Janet Roth

25, 50, AND 75 YEARS AGO



August 26, 1988

DES MOINES, Iowa — The Mark Curtis Defense Committee has announced an initial speakers’ list for the second international defense rally for the framed-up political activist. The rally will be held at the Des Moines Convention Center on September 4.

In addition to Curtis, speakers will include Neo Mnumzana, chief representative to the United Nations of the African National Congress of South Africa; Piri Thomas, distinguished Puerto Rican author and poet; Roger Allison, director of the Missouri Rural Crisis Center; and Héctor Marroquín, a Mexican-born socialist who has been fighting for 11 years to win permanent residency in the United States.

Curtis was framed up on rape and burglary charges and brutally beaten by the Des Moines cops last March 4, hours after he left a meeting protesting an immigration raid at the Swift packinghouse. Curtis works at Swift.



September 2, 1963

WASHINGTON, D.C., Aug. 29 — The massiveness — a quarter of a million people is the best estimate — was the outstanding feature of yesterday’s March for Jobs and Freedom. This was also the most important thing about the march. For both friend and foe were carefully watching to see in what numbers Negroes would come out. To the politicians, the top union brass, the liberals, the fence-sitters and to the white supremacists — indeed to all social and political realists, the march’s size would be a gauge of whether the Freedom Now fight was still in its upsurge or beginning to subside.

The Negro people were watching it very closely themselves and were exhilarated by the record-breaking turnout. It was also a source of great encouragement to those whites who are dependable allies of the Negroes, and who constituted about ten per cent of the marchers.



August 27, 1938

Reactionaries everywhere have rallied around the House Committee to Investigate Un-American Activities of which Congressman Martin Dies of Texas is the chairman. They look hopefully to the Committee’s becoming a real battering ram to be used against everything and everybody that might in the least interfere with the “inalienable right” of the employers to exploit the workers to their hearts’ content.

One of the main purposes of the Dies Committee is to counteract the evidence brought out by the LaFollette Civil Liberties Committee.

Witnesses before that committee showed how the employers spent huge sums to buy armaments with which to arm the scum of the earth for murderous attacks on active unionists; how vigilante organizations were created and “spontaneous” mobbings organized — all in order to destroy every form of unionism.

TRADE UNIONS in the Epoch of Imperialist Decay by Leon Trotsky

“More food for thought (and action) than will be found in any book on the union question.” —FARRELL DOBBS

\$16

INCLUDES: “Trade Unions: Their Past, Present and Future” by Karl Marx

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Egyptian army kills hundreds

Continued from front page

and tanks in the early morning, the army and police attacked two camps set up six weeks ago by the Muslim Brotherhood to demand the return of the Morsi government, ousted after millions took to the streets throughout Egypt demanding his resignation.

Morsi was elected president in June 2012, taking the place of a military junta that had removed dictator Hosni Mubarak in February 2011 after weeks of popular protest. Working people took advantage of the space opened up with the ouster of Mubarak — and the competition between competing factions of the capitalist class, especially the military and the Muslim Brotherhood — to organize unions, demand higher wages and better work conditions, and push for rights for rural toilers.

Over the next year, workers, farmers and layers of the middle classes experienced rapidly deteriorating economic conditions along with attempts to clamp down on democratic rights. Toilers were pressed to bear the brunt of the economic crisis and confronted relentless efforts to put a lid on labor struggles and union organizing. As part of its broader assault on rights, the Brotherhood sought to use state power to impose its sectarian view of Islam and encouraged attacks by thugs against those who disagreed.

The website of Qatar-based news service al-Jazeera, which supports the Brotherhood, showed government snipers firing at the camps, as well as some Muslim Brotherhood supporters firing semi-automatic weapons. Muslim Brotherhood backers attacked a dozen police stations in response, and burned down more than seven Christian churches.

The military — which owns factories, real estate, and farms and is the single-largest employer in the country — never ceased being the main pillar of bourgeois rule. On the heels of popular pressure to oust Morsi, the military high command is now moving to deal lasting blows to the Muslim Brotherhood, its main capitalist competitor, which not long ago was forced to function underground. With its backing from a section of capitalists in Egypt and throughout the Middle East and its history of organization and discipline, the Brotherhood is the one force capable of being seriously armed in short order and posing a military threat to the army.

On the eve of the crackdown Mansour appointed 20 new heads of provinces — 13 of them former or current military and police officials. The appointment of former police official Samy Sedhom as deputy governor of Sharqiya province “caused an outcry by a number of activists,” *Al-Ahram* reported, because of his “prominent role in political repression during the Mubarak era.”

On August 12, army troops tried to disperse a sit-in by workers demanding higher pay at Suez Steel in Suez and allowed police to arrest two strikers.

“I am against what happened in Rabaa Square [the attack on the Brotherhood camp] and the state of emergency,” Fatma Ramadan, a leader of the Egyptian Federation of Independent Trade Unions, told the *Militant* by phone from Cairo Aug. 15. At the same time, she said, the

attacks on the churches shows that the Brotherhood “is taking revenge against ordinary people. This situation deepens the divisions among workers.”

The crackdown “is the only way to deal with the Muslim Brotherhood, although I am opposed to the bloodshed,” Mahmoud Salama, a construction worker in Ismailia, said by phone. “We as workers are not armed, we only have the army to stand between them and us.”

The April 6 Youth Movement, which played an important role in the protests against the Mubarak dictatorship and against the Morsi regime, condemned the attack on the pro-Morsi sit-ins, while noting that the Islamist group had been provocative, deliberately hoping for martyrs.

“Muslim Brotherhood leading figures and the interim government preferred bloody confrontation in order to achieve their goals,” the group said in an April 15 statement. “The regime wanted to enforce its rule and the Muslim Brotherhood wanted to use the blood of the victims to make political gain.”

The administration of Barack Obama issued a statement condemning the military’s moves. He cancelled a joint military exercise scheduled for next month. But no mention was made of trimming back the \$1.3 billion in annual aid to Egypt’s military, with which Washington has maintained close relations for decades.

Bashar Abu-Saifan in Beirut, Lebanon, contributed to this article

Rally backs California prisoners on hunger strike



LOS ANGELES — Sylvia Rogokos (inset) speaks at a July 30 protest in Sacramento, Calif., to support hundreds of prisoners on hunger strike throughout the state demanding an end to long-term solitary confinement and other inhumane practices.

Rogokos’ bother Frank is a hunger striker who has spent the last 23 years in solitary at Pelican Bay State Prison where he taught himself to draw.

“He won a \$300 prize from Lowrider magazine for a drawing of Frida Kahlo and gave the money to a sick friend of the family,” Rogokos said.

But that drawing got Frank another six years in the prison’s Security Housing Unit. Prison authorities said Kahlo’s earrings and another picture of a female Aztec warrior in the magazine were “proof” that Frank is a gang member — and being labeled as such is often the sole basis for imposing the torturous conditions of solitary.

“They do this and then claim in public that the prisoners are the worst of the worst!” said Rogokos.

The action was organized by California Families to Abolish Solitary Confinement, which campaigns to expose inhumane prison conditions and organizes support for the hunger strikers.

— WENDY LYONS

Justice Department vows to restore voting rights

Continued from front page

er with the passage of the 1965 law and subsequent renewals. These included governments of nine states — Alabama, Alaska, Arizona, Georgia, Louisiana, Mississippi, South Carolina, Texas and Virginia — as well as scores of local governments from sections of New York City to Monterey County, Calif.

The 5-4 Supreme Court decision overrode a 25-year extension of the provision that was passed overwhelmingly by Congress and signed by President George W. Bush in 2006.

The majority argued that the preclearance list was based on outdated criteria and that today voter registration rates of Blacks and Caucasians were roughly equal.

“True, conditions in the South have impressively improved since passage of the Voting Rights Act,” Ginsburg said. “Congress noted this improvement and found that the VRA was the driving force behind it. But Congress also found that voting discrimination had evolved into subtler second-generation barriers, and that eliminating preclearance would risk loss of the gains

that had been made.”

Ginsburg cited eight recent examples typical of attempts to disenfranchise Blacks and Latinos in which the Justice Department had to step in. Among them:

— “Following the 2000 Census, the City of Albany, Ga., proposed a redistricting plan that DOJ found to be ‘designed with the purpose to limit and retrogress the increased black voting strength.’”

— “In 2001, the mayor and all-white five-member Board of Aldermen of Kilmichael, Miss., abruptly canceled the town’s election after ‘an unprecedented number’ of African-American candidates announced they were running.”

— “In 2003, after African-Americans won a majority of the seats on the school board for the first time in history, Charleston County, S.C., proposed an at-large voting mechanism ... found to be an ‘exact replica’ of an earlier voting scheme that ... violated the VRA.”

— “In 2004, Waller County, Texas, threatened to prosecute two black students after they announced their intention to run for office. The county then attempted to reduce the availability of early voting in that election at polling places near a historically black university.”

“The Court makes no genuine attempt to engage with the massive legislative record that Congress assembled,” Ginsburg wrote. “Instead, it relies on increases in voter registration and turnout as if that were the whole story.”

“Given a record replete with examples of denial or abridgement of a paramount federal right,” Ginsburg said, “the Court should have left the matter where it belongs: in Congress’ bailiwick.”

Immediately after the Supreme Court knocked the teeth out of the act, Texas Attorney General Greg Abbott said the state’s law requiring voters have government-issued IDs would take effect immediately and that redistricting maps already challenged in court would be implemented without federal approval.

In 1975 Congress, again by a large majority, included provisions that outlawed discrimination aimed at Latinos, Asians and other “language minority groups” as part of the Voting Rights Act.

Last year a federal court found the Texas state legislature had drawn congressional districts that were clearly aimed at diminishing the weight of Latino voters. Citing this decision as evidence that “intentional discrimination” exists in Texas, Holder is asking the court to reimpose preclearance for voting changes for the next 10 years.

“The Justice Department’s brief cited four instances in the last three years alone in which local jurisdictions failed to show that proposed voting changes did not have a discriminatory purpose,” the *New York Times* editorialized July 27. “That’s not including either the redistricting case or a separate suit filed over Texas’s new voter ID law.”

“A lot of Blacks don’t have transportation to get to the polls and funds to get a voter ID card, which cost \$15 to \$25,” Kenneth Davidson, NAACP president

Continued on page 11

Help distribute ‘Militant’ at Aug. 24 March on Washington

To pick up a *Militant* bundle, come to our literature table at Independence Avenue and 12th Street NW (Smithsonian Museum stop on the Blue or Orange lines), starting at 7 a.m. For more information, call (202) 536-5080 or email: swp.washingtondc@verizon.net.

Grand jury refuses to indict NY cop who killed Graham

BY SETH GALINSKY

NEW YORK — The parents of Ramarley Graham are calling for federal civil rights charges against the Officer Richard Haste, who killed the unarmed 18-year-old Black youth in the bathroom of Graham's home in the Bronx after a grand jury refused to hand down an indictment Aug. 7.

"My son was not running, he had no gun, but the grand jury said let this man walk. This is sending the wrong message," Ramarley's mother Constance Malcolm told the *Militant* at an Aug. 10 protest against the grand jury's decision.



Militant/Seth Galinsky

"I no longer have any faith in this system," Constance Malcolm told press Aug. 10, following grand jury refusal to indict cop who killed her son Ramarley Graham.

"They are saying that they don't see Blacks and Latinos as humans."

"We will review all the available evidence ... to determine whether there were any violations of the federal criminal civil rights laws," said U.S. Justice Department's Attorney's Office spokesperson Jerika Richardson in a statement issued after the decision.

"The Justice Department says they're looking into it," Malcolm said. "But I no longer have any faith in this system. I won't believe them until they bring charges."

Haste was indicted on first- and second-degree manslaughter charges four months after the Feb. 2, 2012, shooting. But State Supreme Court Judge Steven Barrett dismissed the charges in May this year, ruling that prosecutors had made an error when they instructed the grand jury not to take into account police reports that say other cops watching Graham told Haste that Graham's behavior indicated he was armed.

Under pressure from dozens of protests organized by Malcolm and Ramarley's father Frank Graham, the Bronx district attorney convened a second grand jury.

Cops claim they saw Ramarley Graham "acting suspicious" and followed him home after they saw him "fidgeting" with his waistband. A video shows



Militant/Seth Galinsky

Aug. 10 march and rally condemned decision by grand jury to not indict Officer Richard Haste who gunned down 18-year-old Ramarley Graham in the bathroom of Graham's home.

the teenager entering the house and closing the door behind him. Seconds later cops try to enter. Finding the door locked, they unsuccessfully attempt to kick it open. The cops swarm around the house, enter through the back door and head upstairs.

Police reports say Haste thought Graham was reaching for a gun. They also say cops retrieved marijuana Graham was apparently attempting to flush down the toilet. His grandmother, who witnessed the killing, was immediately detained by the cops and held at the nearby precinct for seven hours.

About 100 people, including many neighborhood residents, joined the Aug. 10 rally, which began at the home in the Bronx where Graham was killed.

"You're telling me that if the prosecutor wanted an indictment he couldn't get it?" Chadley Hughes, 45, a freelance

carpenter who lives nearby, told the *Militant*. "They like to say they can indict a ham sandwich even if it's baloney."

"I've been protesting since day one," added Terry Johnson, 38. "I don't like the cops getting away with murder."

"I'm not much older than Ramarley," said Kye Smith, 20, a UPS worker who was attending his first protest. "It could've been me."

"Maybe white youth get harassed," said Smith, who is Black. "But at the end of the day we're the main targets."

Graham is one of 21 people killed by New York City cops last year. Not a single city police officer has stood trial in a criminal court since 2008 when the cops who killed Sean Bell in a hail of 50 bullets were acquitted.

Among the speakers at the rally were Juanita Young, mother of Malcolm Ferguson, who was killed by New York City cops in 2000; Crystal Davis, sister of Shantel Davis, killed by the cops in 2012; Dashawn Williams from the National Action Network; Democratic Party mayoral candidate John Liu; Sha'Allah Shabazz from the Nation of Islam; and Mike Greys from 100 Blacks in Law Enforcement and Freedom Party candidate for mayor.

After the rally participants marched to the 47th Police Precinct.

Malcolm encouraged participants to go to Washington, D.C., Aug. 24 for the 50th anniversary of the massive civil rights March on Washington on a bus sponsored by Ramarley's Call, set up to back the fight to indict the cops. For more information visit www.ramarleyscall.net.

Miami Beach cop kills young artist with Taser

Continued from page 4

deaths in the last 12 years of people who have been hit by the weapons, which deliver 50,000 volts of electricity. Since 2009 the manufacturer has recommended they not be fired at the chest.

Several hundred people turned out for the rally Aug. 10. Offir Hernández, Israel's sister, thanked those present on behalf of the family, who moved to Miami from Colombia several years ago. "We want clarity on what happened," she said.

The family's lawyer, Todd McPharlin, said the family is calling for an independent investigation. "Yesterday we learned the Florida Department of Law Enforcement will be getting involved into that investigation," he told rally participants. "We see that as a first step."

The parents of two other men who died after being fired upon by a Taser and beaten by local cops took part in the rally. The mother of Camilo Guzman told the rally about her son's death at the hands of North Miami police in January 2012.

George Salgado, 21, "was hog-tied, beaten, and tasered" by West Miami police in April 2012, his father, also named George Salgado, told the *Militant*. "We still haven't even been given the autopsy report. They claim it's still under investigation."

"Hopefully by doing this we'll stop someone else from going through this pain," Salgado said, referring to the protests.

Hernández's death is the latest of many killings by police in the Miami area that have sparked outrage and drawn national attention.

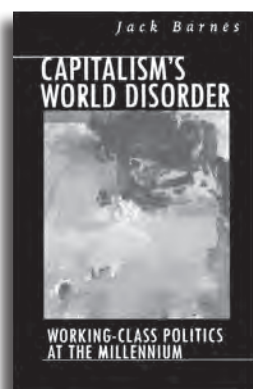
On Memorial Day weekend in 2011, Miami Beach police officers fired more than 100 shots at a vehicle they said had been driving erratically — well after it had come to a full stop. The driver, Raymond Herisse, was killed and four bystanders seriously injured. More than two years later, the shooting is still "under investigation."

Later the same summer another Miami Beach cop who was drinking on the job ran over two people on the beach while joy-riding in a cop all-terrain-vehicle.

In July the U.S. Justice Department released a report on its investigation of 33 shootings by the Miami Police De-

partment between 2008 and 2011. It said the department "engages in a pattern or practice of excessive use of force with respect to firearm discharges."

Meanwhile, in Warrington, in northern Florida, two Escambia County sheriff deputies were put on paid leave after they shot a 60-year-old Black man in his own driveway July 28. Roy Middleton was getting a pack of cigarettes out of the car, and someone called 911 to report a possible robbery. The police opened fire, shattering Middleton's leg. "It was like a firing squad," Middleton told the *Pensacola News Journal* from his hospital bed. "Bullets were flying everywhere."



Pathfinder books for working-class fighters

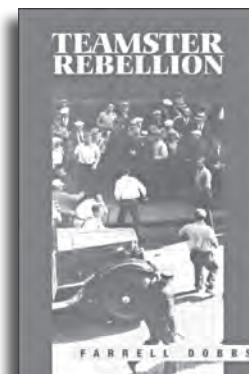
"... the purpose of the cops is to punish, not patrol. The purpose of the cops is to keep workers in line to make an example of you if you come from the wrong class — and more so if you also happen to be the wrong color or the wrong nationality. The ruling class has a 'beasts of the jungle' mentality. They despise — and fear — the great mass of working people."

—JACK BARNES IN CAPITALISM'S WORLD DISORDER (\$25)

"Under capitalism the main police function is to break strikes and to repress other forms of protest ... Any civic usefulness other police activity may have, like controlling traffic, is strictly incidental to the primary repressive function. Personal inclinations of individual cops do not alter this basic role. ... As a result, police repression becomes one of the most naked forms through which capitalism subordinates human rights to the demands of private property."

—FARRELL DOBBS IN TEAMSTER REBELLION (\$19)

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Deepening the working-class character of the SWP

From Des Moines to Caracas, implementing the proletarian political course of the party

BY JOHN STUDER

From campaigning for socialist candidates in Des Moines, Iowa, to participating in an international gathering in solidarity with the Cuban Revolution in Caracas, Venezuela, socialist workers coming out of the July 18-20 Active Workers Educational Conference in Oberlin, Ohio, have begun advancing the proletarian party-building perspectives presented and discussed there.

Over the Aug. 10-11 weekend supporters of Socialist Workers Party candidates joined together in Des Moines to campaign door to door in workers' neighborhoods, getting the *Militant* around and collecting 425 signatures on nominating petitions — over the number required to put three independent working-class candidates for city council on the ballot. Campaigners sold 13 subscriptions to the *Militant* and five books. (See article on front page.)

"We discussed a whole range of politics with workers," Dennis Richter, who drove down from Chicago to help out, told the *Militant*. "We discussed why the SWP is running, why working people need a perspective of fighting to take political power. Although most weren't ready to buy the paper, a big majority signed to help put a working-class candidate on the ballot."

"This is what we mean when we say we test the party's course by taking our politics onto workers' doorsteps," said Margaret Trowe, one of the SWP's city council candidates and organizer of the campaign effort in Des Moines.

At the heart of the Ohio conference, sponsored by the SWP, was a discussion on progress over the last year in doing that. Socialist workers have been testing and adjusting how they explain the party's political course in discussions with working people on their doorsteps — and seeking to join with them in common political activity and solidarity with workers struggles.

The response to these efforts — including three successful subscription drives that have expanded the reach of the *Militant* and books on revolutionary working-class politics — was reflected at the gathering in the 14 workers who were participating in an international socialist conference for the first time.

Along this course, we're deepening the working-class character of the par-



Top, Militant/Carole Lesnick

Some of more than 300 people attending July 18-20 Active Workers Educational Conference in Oberlin, Ohio, sponsored by Socialist Workers Party. At right, participants from U.S. and other countries view some of dozens of displays illustrating politics and perspectives discussed at gathering.

ty, said SWP National Secretary Jack Barnes in his talk to more than 300 conference participants. We're opening up the party to more workers.

The party's propaganda work door to door in workers' neighborhoods, Barnes said, is part and parcel of the turn to the industrial working class and unions the SWP has been carrying out since the mid-1970s.

The party's perspectives, Barnes said, are built on the openness we're finding among workers to an explanation of how capitalism is responsible for today's world crisis of production and trade. Above all, he said, the party's activity registers the response we're getting to a revolutionary working-class course to combat the capitalist rulers' grinding assault on working people, our unions, and political rights, as well as their military and "intelligence" operations to protect their profits and class interests.

As we take the *Militant*, books and election campaigns to working-class communities, Barnes said, we present demands that promote class solidarity, confidence and combativity. Demands such as the need to fight for a big raise in the minimum wage and a massive public works program to provide jobs for millions out of work.

We introduce workers to the worldwide campaign to win freedom for the

Cuban Five, five Cuban revolutionaries framed up and imprisoned in the United States for working to defend the revolution from paramilitary attacks organized from U.S. soil. Workers in the U.S. see the connection between this frame-up and experiences of millions here chewed up by plea bargains, draconian mandatory sentences, stop-and-frisk, and other indignities meted out to working people by the so-called criminal justice system.

The aim of the conference was to better prepare workers participating to carry out this course, grounded in a weekly rhythm of propaganda activity in workers' neighborhoods. Among the concrete tasks projected were the party's 2013 election campaigns, and a number of reporting trips, conferences and other events from Venezuela to Egypt, Malaysia and Indonesia.

The successful campaigning and ballot drive in Des Moines came on the heels of efforts organized by supporters of the SWP campaign in New York City to gain a ballot spot for three city-wide candidates: Dan Fein for mayor, John Studer for comptroller and Deborah Liatos for public advocate.

In New York, however, organizers of the effort didn't carry it out along the course decided by the party of taking all its campaigns to workers house by house, apartment by apartment (as socialist workers in New York had, in fact, been doing prior to the ballot drive). Instead they petitioned on street corners, as they'd done in years past, moving rapidly from person to person to maximize the number of signatures.

As a result, campaign supporters in New York sold just a handful of *Militant* subscriptions and only one book and made fewer contacts than campaigners did in Des Moines. Drawing lessons from this setback to the party's course, however, the campaign in the Midwest points a way forward — not administering an effort starting from signature rates and numbers, but leading a political campaign taking advantage of broad interest among workers in a



working-class alternative to capitalist politics.

Omaha: pushing back class enemy

Just before the Active Workers Conference began, there was a political break-in at the home of Jacob Perasso — SWP candidate for city council in Omaha, Neb., earlier this year and a leader of efforts to establish a party branch there. Perasso discovered that others, like himself, who have been active in the fight against police brutality and union struggles in Omaha have had their tires slashed or faced other attacks.

At the conference Perasso announced steps already underway to repel this attack, increase the party's activity and build an SWP branch in Omaha.

Over the next few weeks, defenders of political rights in Omaha got the word out about the attack. A number of Black rights fighters, unionists, and others joined the fight to assert the right of workers to engage in struggles and political activity free of harassment. By early August the assault had been effectively pushed back.

"I went to Omaha this winter to help put Jacob on the ballot, I got to know him a little bit," Kevin Cole told the *Militant*. Cole, a postal worker and member of the American Postal Workers Union from Anaheim, Calif., was attending his first socialist conference. "I think the decision to amp up the party's work there in response to the break-in, to run more campaigns and step up door-to-door sales of the paper is exactly the right way to react."

Mario Ottoniel, a 34-year-old construction worker, is one of two workers from New York who decided to move to Omaha as part of the response. "I'm looking forward to learning and being able to better explain about the party,



Militant/Betsey Stone

Hundreds of books and pamphlets on revolutionary working-class politics were picked up over two days by participants from Pathfinder literature tables at rear of conference hall.

Socialist Workers Party

July 18-20 Active Workers Conference

so I can help people understand and I can better help the party,” Ottoniel told a gathering in New York to send off the two socialists.

Talking politics the world over

Among several international trips organized in the weeks following the active workers conference, a number of party members, young socialists, and supporters of the communist movement from the U.S., Canada, and the United Kingdom left straight from Ohio to join some 500 other participants in the Continental Conference in Solidarity with Cuba, held in Caracas July 24-27.

They took part in discussions there aimed at strengthening international efforts to free the Cuban Five, as well as debates on how workers and farmers can successfully combat U.S. imperialist domination of Latin America and exploitation by landlords and capitalists in their own countries.

In pointing to the example of the Cuban Revolution, the socialist workers found interest among delegates in books and pamphlets recounting how workers and farmers in Cuba, under the leadership of Fidel Castro and others, mobilized a revolutionary struggle to take power, establish their own government, and defend it for more than five decades against Washington’s unrelenting attacks. And how working people in Cuba have used that power to overturn capitalist social relations and in the process transform themselves as more class-conscious, selfless, and internationalist human beings.

No letup in assault on workers

The active workers conference drew members of the SWP and sister Communist Leagues from Australia, Canada, New Zealand and the United Kingdom, supporters of these communist organizations, and workers the party has been collaborating with in weekly propaganda work and political and union activity.

In addition to the main conference presentations by Barnes and by National Committee member Mary-Alice Waters, there were five classes related to political themes in these talks. Barnes and Waters, along with Steve Clark and Norton Sandler, who presented two of the classes, gave summary remarks the final day. The gathering concluded Saturday evening with a panel, “What We’ve Accomplished and Where We Go from Here” — which painted a picture of what participants would be doing over the weeks and months to come. The panel ended with a fund appeal that raised more than \$21,000 to help the party carry out its work.

While the capitalist ruling class and its government say there’s an economic recovery, Barnes said in his opening talk, there’s no relief for workers from high unemployment in the U.S. and elsewhere in the capitalist world. Many bosses are replacing fulltime with part-time and temporary workers.

The opening day of the conference, Detroit’s capitalist rulers filed for bankruptcy, aiming to gut the unions, health care and retirement pensions of city employees and further squeeze workers there. The aim, Barnes said, is that

while working people bleed, the capitalist bondholders are guaranteed payment on their interest and principal.

The capitalists have no “right” way out of their crisis, no fiscal or monetary policy that will increase profit rates or lay the basis to expand plant, equipment, and employment. Cranking out trillions of newly “printed” dollars, the Federal Reserve has driven down short-term interest rates to zero, as workers and layers of the middle class who rely on income from savings or annuities are pushed to the wall.

Despite this massive “stimulus,” there’s been no increase in employment. The rulers and their government are doing nothing to fund public works programs to create jobs, “shovel ready” or otherwise. And due to the class-collaborationist course of the union officialdom, the rulers feel no pressure from workers’ actions to do so.

Across Europe, too, capitalism remains mired in contraction. In Greece, Cyprus, Spain and beyond, millions are out of work. The “bright spot” the capitalists have kept pointing to — contin-



Militant/Laura Anderson

Pen in hand, Maggie Trowe, Socialist Workers Party candidate for city council, campaigns door to door in Des Moines, Iowa, collecting signatures for ballot status Aug. 10.

ued growth of production and trade in China — is dimming, Barnes said.

Meanwhile, the propertied rulers see a future they fear in world developments today, from class battles in Bangladesh — where garment workers, the big majority women, are at the forefront of rising workers struggles — to Egypt, Turkey and beyond.

Barnes pointed to the stakes for working people in mobilizing against the recent Supreme Court ruling gutting a key section of the 1965 Voting Rights Act. Those rights were conquered in mighty

proletarian battles for Black rights in the 1950s and ’60s. They stood on the shoulders of the 13th, 14th and 15th Amendments to the Constitution, fought for in blood during the Civil War and Radical Reconstruction.

He also discussed the danger to the working class posed by vigilante attacks, such as the killing of Trayvon Martin by George Zimmerman. Even accepting Zimmerman’s version, it’s clear this armed “neighborhood watchman” consciously took the law into his

Continued on page 10

Greetings to conference from Cuban Five

Below are greetings sent by Fernando González on behalf of the Cuban Five to the July 19-20 Active Workers Educational Conference, followed by a response sent on behalf of the gathering.

July 12, 2013

It’s a wonderful initiative for the SWP to call an Active Workers Educational Conference like this. The Cuban Five thank you for the opportunity to send greetings to all those taking part.

You are meeting at a very important moment. Never has it been so clear how capitalism is shifting the burden of its economic crisis onto the shoulders of the working class.

From the United States to Greece, Cyprus, Portugal, Spain, and the United Kingdom, it has been workers, ordinary working people, who have been sacrificed by the governments of their countries in order to rescue a wealthy handful, representatives of finance capital.

Never has the global collusion between capital and the governments representing its interests been so evident — collusion within each country and internationally as well.

Finance capital imposes its conditions everywhere in the universe. That is why a concerted global response by workers worldwide is necessary as well.

Now more than ever we should remember the words of Karl Marx, more than a hundred fifty years ago, calling for workers of the world to unite.

The struggle for justice is our common struggle. You, despite the difficulties, have been tireless defenders of our right to be free and to return to Cuba.

We wish you success in your discussions and deliberations, and to all of you, we convey our gratitude and our confidence in victory.

Venceremos!
Gerardo Hernández
Antonio Guerrero
Ramón Labañino
René González
Fernando González



Message to Gerardo, Ramón, Antonio, Fernando, and René from the National Committee of the Socialist Workers Party

On behalf of the 2013 Active Workers Educational Conference:

A prolonged standing ovation was the heartfelt response of more than 300 participants in the July 19-21 Active Workers Educational Conference in Oberlin, Ohio, to the message received from Fernando González on behalf of the Cuban Five. The ovation was an expression of deep respect for the unbending proletarian integrity of each and every one of you, and the historic importance of the Cuban Revolution you exemplify.

One of the highlights of the gathering

was a display of Antonio’s fifteen watercolor drawings, “I will die the way I lived,” marking your fifteen years of unwavering resistance and dignity. The voices of each of you are heard through that powerful work. It can and will carry your fight to literally millions of working people in the United States and beyond who will recognize the truth of your story from their own experiences with the same system of capitalist “justice” you have faced.

Through their response to your greetings, conference participants expressed their commitment to use that powerful new weapon far and wide as we redouble our efforts — fighting side by side with many tens of thousands of others around the world — to win the day when together with René you are all once again on Cuban soil.

s/Jack Barnes
Jack Barnes
National Secretary
Socialist Workers Party



Militant photos: top, Betsey Stone; Inset, Arnold Weissberg

Top, standing ovation at Active Workers Educational Conference’s closing panel July 20 in response to greetings sent by Cuban Five. Inset, Socialist Workers Party leader Mary-Alice Waters reads their message.

Deepening party's proletarian character

Continued from page 9
own hands — like vigilantes throughout history targeting labor militants, communists, Blacks, immigrants, and others. And it's no mystery, Barnes said, that Martin decided to defend himself, as millions of 17-year-old boys on the way to manhood would have done.

Defense of the Cuban Five

In her presentation, Mary-Alice Waters pointed to the political example set by the Cuban Five — Gerardo Hernández, Ramón Labañino, Antonio Guerrero, Fernando González and René González.

"These five fighters are exemplary products of the Cuban Revolution," she said. The worldwide campaign to win their freedom is strengthened by explaining who they are — and what their proletarian political consciousness, integrity, and courage says about the Cuban Revolution itself.

Moreover, Waters said, the experiences and conduct of the Five in U.S. prisons for 15 years strike a chord with tens of millions of workers who themselves — or their brothers, sisters, fathers, or friends — have been caught up in the capitalist criminal "justice" system.

This underlines the importance of socialist workers talking about the fight for freedom of the Five with workers on doorsteps around the country, most of whom haven't yet heard about this frame-up. In the process, we point to the Five as examples of the kind of disciplined revolutionaries needed to build a workers party in the United States.

At the same time, Waters said, socialist workers look for opportunities to join with others in public activity to advance this defense campaign. She pointed to openings to organize broadly sponsored showings of the political cartoons of Gerardo Hernández, as well as the new exhibit of watercolors by Antonio Guerrero, "I will die the way I lived." These 15 paintings — one for each of their 15 years in prison — depict aspects of prison life common not only to the Five but to tens of millions of workers in the U.S. and the world over.

There is no better tool in this effort than the Pathfinder book *The Cuban Five: Who They Are, Why They Were Framed, Why They Should Be Freed*, first published in 2011 and now in its third edition in English, second in Spanish, and released this spring in French.

Helping produce the latest editions of this book to meet the party's political needs has been a high point over the past year of efforts by supporters of the communist movement organized in the Print Project, said Gale Shangold, a leader of the project, in remarks to the closing conference panel. As with other titles, this involved proofreading, formatting, and other work, as well as organizing the printing, warehousing, sales work, and shipping to bookstores and libraries.

Shangold also reported progress in expanding the Supporters Monthly Appeal, which raises hundreds of thousands of dollars a year to help finance party work. The day after the conference, Print Project members met to discuss how to step up the many aspects of their volunteer efforts.

In Waters' report and summary, as well as the Saturday evening panel, conference participants also heard about work by party members and young socialists, together with other groups here and abroad, to build the World Festival of Youth and Students to be held in December in Ecuador. Organizing participation in that large international gathering provides another opportunity to exchange views on how to advance concrete action against imperialist exploitation and oppression, and to strengthen the campaign to free the Cuban Five.

Francois Vincent, a student at the University of Montreal and worker

in a city park, told the *Militant* that the presentation by Waters and two related conference classes "were a big help for me in preparing to do more to defend the Cuban Five and to argue with friends who aren't convinced that the road of the Cuban Revolution is the road for all of us."

Workers are the union

During the conference summaries, Steve Clark described a debate over a statement he made in a class presentation that the unions today aren't weak; they're hamstrung by decades of class collaboration by the labor officialdom. There are millions of workers in the unions.

The officials' lament that the unions are "weak," Clark said, is a rationalization for their refusal to organize workers into the labor movement and use union power — instead of subordinating workers and our unions to the bosses, their government, and the capitalist Democratic and Republican parties.

Don't think of the union as a "thing," Barnes said in his summary remarks. The union is an activity, a movement. *We are the union* — that's what communist workers need to remind ourselves and other workers. And when workers take hold of this powerful instrument to fight back against attacks by the bosses and their government, that lays the basis for further steps to organize a revolutionary social and *political* movement to advance the fight for workers power.

No one knows when or where there will be such a sustained rise in workers' resistance to the bosses' relentless blows against jobs, wages and working conditions, or in the fight against racism, for the rights of women, against imperialist wars or in defense of workers' political space to organize and act in our class interests.

But beginning to build the kind of revolutionary working-class organization our class needs *before* the bigger battles come is decisive, Barnes said.



Militant/Jonathan Silberman
Gerardo Sánchez from San Francisco sells *Militant* subscription to fellow participant at July 24-27 Continental Conference in Solidarity with Cuba, held in Caracas, Venezuela.

All the party's experiences over the last year, he said, confirm that the course we are on — timely participation with others in political activity and labor struggles in the interests of the working class, anchored in weekly propaganda door to door in working-class neighborhoods — is the road to deepening the struggle for a proletarian party today.

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Fight to defend Voting Rights Act!

Working people should welcome Attorney General Eric Holder July 25 pledge to restore voting rights following a Supreme Court ruling striking them down. We should closely watch how competently and thoroughly the Justice Department pursues reimposing this historic victory for the working class, so easily dismissed by the majority of the black-robed administrators of class justice.

The working class and its allies must organize a counteroffensive against the Supreme Court’s move to deal a blow to one of the central codified gains of the massive, proletarian Black rights struggle of the 1950s and ’60s. We must recognize and act on the understanding that we can’t simply leave protecting this — or any other working-class gain — in the hands of the federal government.

Our first such opportunity will be the Aug. 24 March on Washington, called by Black rights organizations, dozens of unions, women’s rights groups and many others. Organizers have put defense of the Voting Rights Act at the center of the action.

The Supreme Court *unconstitutionally* threw out the list of state and local governments required to get approval from the federal government for any changes in their voting laws with the argument that the list was based on outdated criteria. The real question is: have conditions in the South and elsewhere changed such that there is no longer a need for federal intervention to prevent denial of the most basic democratic voting rights? The answer is clearly no. Voter disenfranchisement persists and has taken on new insidious forms. If conditions have changed enough to make this requirement unnecessary in some areas, the onus should be on each jurisdiction to *prove* so and request its removal on that basis.

Many of the rules used to disenfranchise working people are presented as efforts to prevent “voting

fraud” and include restrictive ID requirements and other red tape. Such policing of the electorate will impede many who are legally entitled to vote from doing so. Other methods include restricting voting hours and other administrative changes that create inconveniences that fall with great disproportion on working people.

We should also join march organizers in drawing attention to the millions of working people, in vastly disproportionate numbers African-American, who are legally branded as “felons” and thereby denied their voting rights — a question not even touched by the Voting Right Act. The fact is the numbers in this category and the restrictions imposed on them has only grown in recent decades.

History is not simply the past. We need to understand the present arising out of a history of class struggle, look at all political questions from the point of view of the interests of the working class and act on that basis. The working class in the U.S. was dealt its greatest historic defeat with the bloody overthrow of Radical Reconstruction in the years that followed the Civil War — the second American revolution — and the imposition of Jim Crow, policed by vigilante thugs and cops, who were often one and the same.

The Black rights struggle nearly a century later was able to push back, but not overturn, that counter-revolution. That battle permanently strengthened the fighting capacity and foundation for unity of the working class. It put the toilers in a far stronger position to advance our common interests along the road to wresting political power from the capitalists exploiters — the third and final American revolution, which will open the final battle to end for all time every form of exploitation and oppression perpetuated by class society.

See you in Washington!

Justice Dept. vows to restore voting rights

Continued from page 6

in Palestine, Texas, told the *Militant* in a phone interview Aug. 12. “Officials also try to intimidate older Blacks who go to the polls, saying something is invalid with their IDs.”

Speaking before the National Urban League July 25, Holder said he is considering filing other actions to reimpose federal control, including in South Carolina, where a voter ID law is set to be implemented for the upcoming election.

In North Carolina the legislature also passed a bill that requires government-issued photo IDs to vote; shortens the early voting period; bans same-day registration during early voting; and prohibits counties from extending voting hours because of long lines. More than 300,000 lack the required IDs.

Since opponents of voting rights can’t openly declare their intent, arguments for new anti-working-class measures are often couched as attempts to prevent “voting fraud.”

In Florida, Gov. Rick Scott in early August ordered state election officials to resume a hotly contested effort to remove “noncitizens” from voting rolls. This had been stalled after immigrant advocacy groups challenged it under the Voting Rights Act.

When the state started to implement the original effort in 2011, it began with 182,000 names. The list was quickly cut down to 2,600, many of whom were later found to be citizens. “The list of possible noncitizens shrank to 198. Of those, fewer than 40 had voted illegally,” the *New York Times* reported.

“The stated purpose of the Civil War Amendments was to arm Congress with the power and authority to protect all persons within the Nation from violations of their rights by the States,” Ginsburg wrote in the dissent.

The Voting Rights Act was a historic gain for the working class, passed as the massive proletarian Black rights movement fought to destroy Jim Crow segregation in the 1950s and ’60s. The fight for this right is rooted in working-class battles coming out of the Second American Revolution — the 1861-65 Civil War and Radical Reconstruction over the following decade.

This revolution changed what the Constitution stood for with passage of the 13th Amendment, which abolished slavery and involuntary servitude; the 14th Amendment, which made due process and equal protection the law of the land; and the 15th Amendment, which guaranteed every citizen the right to vote.

The U.S. Constitution and Bill of Rights were written with a heavy emphasis on protection of “states rights” against monarchical tyranny from abroad. But by the Civil War, “states rights” became a banner of the reactionary rebellion of Southern states against the Union. With the passage of the historic 13th, 14th and 15th Amendments, built on the defeat of the slaveholders, federal powers over state governments was used for a period immediately following the Civil War and again after the Black rights battles of the 1950s and ’60s to deal blows to racist reaction.

In the decades after the federal government withdrew union troops as part of the overthrow of Radical Reconstruction in 1876, state governments across the South, backed by the Ku Klux Klan and other racist vigilante gangs, imposed Jim Crow racial segregation by force and violence. In this period of counterrevolutionary reaction, the Supreme Court essentially backed Southern “states rights,” eviscerating the power of the three amendments. The defeat of Radical Reconstruction was the single greatest defeat inflicted on the working class in U.S. history.

It wasn’t until the proletarian-led street battles for Black rights starting in the 1950s that the Jim Crow segregation system — including denial of the right to vote — was brought down. The fight against its vestiges continues today.

Des Moines campaign

Continued from front page

on the ballot — 165 more than the number required. Twenty-one volunteers from Omaha, Neb.; Twin Cities, Minn.; Chicago; and New York joined campaigners in Des Moines.

While campaigning, supporters sold 13 subscriptions to the *Militant*, 31 copies of the paper, and five books, including *Malcolm X*, *Black Liberation*, and *the Road to Workers Power* and *The Cuban Five*.

“We talked to fellow workers about the need to raise the minimum wage and to fight for a massive government-funded jobs program,” Brickley told those at the meeting. “By doing it door to door we got into a lot of rich discussions about what workers are going through, what they are thinking and about our program to build working-class solidarity and confidence along the road to the fight for workers power. Nearly everyone we spoke with signed our petitions.”

Addressing the rally, Jacob Perasso, who ran for city council in Omaha earlier this year, described the work of building the Socialist Workers Party there.

“The rulers have indicated that they do not appreciate the SWP being in Omaha,” said Perasso, commenting on the party’s response to a July 16 political break-in into his home. The culprit left political files strewn about the apartment, while ignoring valuable items in plain sight, he said. The only thing taken was a cellphone containing the records of phone calls and emails Perasso made while participating in a fight against police brutality in north Omaha.

“We pushed the attack back by responding right away, getting the word out widely and stepping up our political campaigning in working-class areas,” he explained. “We put the rulers on notice that we will not be intimidated. Now we are moving forward to establish a branch of the Socialist Workers Party in Omaha, open up a public campaign headquarters and run candidates in the next election.”

Dan Fein, SWP candidate for mayor of New York who flew in to help, described his participation in a delegation to Egypt to express solidarity with workers and farmers there who defended their political space by mobilizing in massive numbers to oust the increasingly unpopular Muslim Brotherhood government of Mohammed Morsi. “We found the biggest gain is increased confidence of the working class,” said Fein.

“I am proud to call Maggie Trowe, David Rosenfeld, and Ellen Brickley my sisters, brother, and comrades in the struggle for the working class,” Buddy Howard, president of the Lee County Labor Council, said in a message to the meeting. Howard explained that he had met the SWP when “me and 237 of my fellow workers were unjustly locked out of our jobs” by Roquette America at its corn processing plant in Keokuk, Iowa, from September 2010 to July 2011.

“I have had the privilege of traveling with them to other struggles,” Howard wrote. “Just look at their platform, whether it’s defending a woman’s right to choose abortion or defending the Cuban Five.

“Finally someone speaks with honesty,” he said, “who doesn’t bow down to the minimum ‘two parties,’ who will never obsequiously succumb to the powers that be.”

Campaigner Helen Meyers met Dan Engstrom, 25, after knocking on his apartment door. “If the minimum wage was raised it would mean I wouldn’t have to decide whether I was going to eat or pay my bills or have anything else left over,” Engstrom, who works at McDonald’s making \$7.50 per hour, told Meyers.

Fein and fellow campaigner Jacquie Henderson talked with waitress Kelly Vincent on her porch about the fight of fast-food workers for \$15 per hour and a union. “I am very much for that,” said Vincent, who makes \$4.35 an hour. “They say we can make up the difference to the \$7.25 an hour minimum wage with tips. But we can’t live on that.”

‘Militant’ publishing schedule

This is a two-week issue of the paper. The next issue will be mailed out on Aug. 29.

Correction

In the Aug. 19 issue, the article “NY event commemorates opening of Cuban Revolution” omitted Leslie Cagan from the list of speakers at the event.